ale

CAMRA

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 412 April 2025

Kingston Arms, Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025

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Pub News

Welcome to Ale 412.

I always find the onset of the warming nights of spring (yes, I'm writing this, during a mini heatwave with full knowledge that it won't last long) a time of looking forward with optimism for the future.

My first pub walk in early March, starting from the **Three Pickerels** in Mepal, and skirting the flooded fields along the New Bedford Level was graced with full sunshine, and whilst not warm enough to wear only a T shirt, the feel good factor was undeniably there. The Three Pickerels is an extensively refurbished riverside hotel which serves one, sometimes two, real ales. On this occasion it was a refreshing Nethergate Venture (3.7%.) Whilst a little out of the way, the view over the river as I sipped my beer seated on the decking was well worth the trip.

Another ramble that coincided with a warm afternoon started and ended at the **Red Lion**, Kirtling. The bus service to Kirtling isn't too regular, but I'd heard good things about the beer in this pub, so was happy to drive out to look.

Branch

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings, as well as our socials.

Tue 8 April Special General Meeting, Maypole
Sat 12 April Minibus Tour of Rural Pubs
Thu 17 April Thursday Throng Social at the Rose & Crown
For a fuller list of local events please check **cambridge-camra.org.uk/events/**.

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Edited by Will Smith, 32 Lovell Road, Cambridge, CB4 2QR. email: **will.smith@cambridge-camra.org.uk**

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Pub News continued

After a 4-mile circular walk passing weirs and through local woods, I was ready for a nice pint. I found it in the form of a well looked after Nethergate Suffolk County 4%

Spring is also the time that CAMRA branches announce the results of the election for their pubs of the year. Congratulations to the Cambridge CAMRA winners: the **Kingston Arms**, Kingston Street (City and Overall Pub of the Year); the **Red Lion**, Swaffham Prior, (Rural Pub of the Year); the **Devonshire Arms**, Devonshire Road, (Cider Pub of the Year), and the **Bottisham Community Sports and Social Club** (Club of the Year).

Drayman's Son

Our colleagues in the Ely CAMRA branch have also announced their winning pubs. The **Drayman's Son**, Forehill (Overall, City and Cider Pub of the Year); the **Carpenter's Arms**, Soham (Rural Pub of the Year) and **Fordham Royal British Legion Club** (Club of the Year).

Looking around the Cambridge pub scene, I found plenty more reason for optimism. Hayley and Steve Pellegrini who recently celebrated 20 years since they acquired tenancy of the Portland Arms, Chesterton Road, have expanded their

business by taking on **Hudson's Ale House**, Trumpington. The pub which was formerly called The Duchess of Cambridge has been tastefully refurbished. It now looks like a proper pub! It is Greene King owned but also offers beer from the SIBA list. I had the privilege to be the first through the door on opening night, accompanied by Charlie from Buntingford Brewery, whose Riwaka Station Pale Ale (4.8%) was in excellent condition.

Another change of name, this time in Little Shelford, where the Navigator (formerly the Plough) has been renamed the **Side Quest** in recognition of new owner Mark Geldart's work as a video games developer. There are plans to provide four cask ales, two of which will be guest ales. We visited in February to find Greene King IPA, London Glory, and Fireside, accompanied by locally brewed Brewboard Ripchord, a 4.3% IPA which was rather nice.

The **Greyhound** Sawston also has a new manager. Welcome to Emily Hadfield who took over the pub in December.

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Pub News continued

A warm welcome too to Jennie Higgins who has taken on the tenancy of the **Chestnut Tree**, West Wratting

Cambridge also has a new brewery. Craft Ale producer, **Pixie Brewing**, is a micro-brewery based in Barrington. Their first brew, Garage Daze NEPA (4.2%), was welcomed at a launch event at the **Northstowe Tap and Social** and was well received in February at the Ely Beer Festival. Picture Pixie brewery logo

Social footballers and rounders teams will surely welcome the exciting news coming from Jesus Green, Cambridge, where former pizza restaurant and bar La Mimosa is to become a wet led pub renamed **Byron's Bear**. The name derives from Lord Byron's pet bear which it is said he adopted in protest at a Trinity College doctrine that students were not allowed to own a pet dog. The team behind the venture is headed by CambsCuisine CEO Oliver Thain.

Othersyde has announced that it will be opening the **Artyst**, a Syd Barrett themed arts cafe at 54 Chesterton Road. Cambridge born, Syd was a founder member of Pink Floyd. The plan is to offer "health-conscious meals, speciality drinks, and a welcoming space for connection and inspiration". There isn't a great deal of information about the beers that will be on offer – though it is proposed that 10 pints will cost £30.00 for crowdfunding supporters of the project. One to watch!

Catching up with some of the pubs we wrote about in Ale 411, we are given more reason for optimism: the **Duke of Wellington**, Willingham, will be reopening in April this year.

Chris Warren, who created the **Bank Micropub** in Willingham 12 years ago has found five locals to help run the pub.

We have received an early report that multi award winning Jess Clausen will be retiring from the **Elm Tree**, Orchard Street, Cambridge at the end of this year.

We would like to wish a happy retirement to Ava and Alan Hewitt who have left the **White Horse**, Milton having served as licensees for 19 years. The pub has been taken on by Rob Parker and Holly who are also licensees of the **Waggon and Horses** Milton.

Staying in Milton, reports about the **Brewers Inn**, suggest that both the beer and the food are good.

A long service award should surely be presented to Derek and Julie Stearn who have looked after Admiral Taverns's **Kings Head**, Fen Ditton for 21 years and who are retiring this spring. We have heard unconfirmed rumours that AT has found a tenant from the local community to take it on.

Lyndsey and Mark who have been licensees of Greene King HIVE franchise Histon pub the **Barley Mow** since 2024 are leaving. No further details given.

Newly on the market: the **Ancient Shepherds**, Fen Ditton is offered freehold for an eyewatering £725,000. A short walk along the river via Ditton Fields, the Shepherds, parts of which date back to 1540, used to be one of our favourite destination pubs. Unfortunately, the current owners did not welcome casual drinking, and it fell out of favour. We remain hopeful that with a change of ownership it may return to be a more accessible venue.

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Pub News continued

Finally, and on a more sombre note. We wanted to tell you of the passing of former Cambridge landlady **Mandy Winnington**. Mandy who died of cancer was, together with her husband Nick, central to the Cambridge pub scene throughout the late 80's and 90's and into the 2000's. It was they who first turned the **Cambridge Blue**, Gwydir Street into an iconic community pub. Mandy played a strong supporting role as Nick took on various, some thought whimsical, roles such as standing for election as a representative of the Monster Raving Loony Party. Though I believe even she was a little confused when he declared that he had created a new Cambridge parish called "The People's Republic of Gwydir Street". They spent more than 20 years together running successful pubs, notably the Cambridge Blue and the Waggon and Horses in Milton before retiring to Wisbech in 2012. Mandy was the heart of the partnership. It was she who would invite the "waifs and strays" as Nick would call them, (locals who were single or who had nowhere else to go) to join them for Sunday and Christmas dinners. Sadly, Nick died in 2022. I am sure that he is happy to once again have Mandy to join him as they sit together in the great bar in the sky.

BEER FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Traditionally, ALE spring edition heralds the beginning of the Beer Festival season, though on this occasion we are a little late in bringing news of some of them to you.

Congratulations to our colleagues in Ely CAMRA for their success in managing their 15th beer festival. Always a great festival, comments received this year especially complimented the increased variety of beer styles that were on offer. This was the last year of service for organisers Tony Gimbert and Phil "Wiggy" Wignall, both having retired after a combined 25 years in charge. Local MP Charlotte Cane was pleased to be asked to present them each with a CAMRA Lifetime Achievement award during the after-festival volunteers' party. Charlotte took the opportunity to tell us how much she understood the current difficulties faced by local pubs and how important pubs are to local communities. She offered her support in raising these issues within Government.

Charlotte Cane and Phil "Wiggy" Wignall

Charlotte Cane and Tony Gimbert

Other successful beer festivals already completed include Booze in the Pews, held in All Saints Church, St Ives, and the Sutton beer festival held in the 14th Century St Andrews Church. The latter has been running since 2008.

Upcoming local beer festivals and events for your diary: Checkout the Cambridge and District website events page for further details (cambridge-camra.org.uk/events/)

- 3rd April **Blue Moon** Norfolk Street, Cambridge. Tap takeover by Pomona Island
- 3rd April **Cambridge Cider and Perry Club**, Saunter round the Elm Tree, Blue Moon, Calverley's and Geldart.
- 12th April **Cambridge CAMRA** minibus tour of rural Cambridge pubs
- 17th April **Rose and Crown**, Glebe Way, Impington, Cambridge CAMRA Thursday Throng Social get together
- 18th-21 st April **Three Horseshoes**, Church Street, Stapleford, Beer Festival
- 26th April **Cantabs Rugby Club**, Sedley Taylor Road, Cambridge, Beer Festival
- Early May Bank Holiday **Sun Inn**, Waterbeach Beer Festival
- 19th-24th May **Cambridge CAMRA** Beer Festival

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Kingston Arms - Cambridge

What makes a CAMRA award winning pub?

Well, obviously, it must serve good cask beer. Variety is important – but less so than the quality of the beer being served. Fortunately for customers of The Kingston Arms, there is plenty of choice. Even the regular beers, Batemans Dark Mild, Draught Bass and Ossett Brewery's, White Rat are rarely found in any other Cambridge pub. Add Tring Brewery's Side Pocket for a Toad as one of up to four changing guest beers alongside four draught ciders and it is difficult to imagine many Cambridge pubs having better choice.

Beer quality is always good. Pub philosophy is such that they would rather tip beer down the drain than serve a poor pint.

Should the unthinkable happen and you receive a tired pint -it hasn't happened to me - it is changed without question, and most importantly, the beer is removed from sale.

Do ask the bar staff about the beers on offer – they'll be pleased to tell you all they know.

CAMRA members who score beer using the Whatpub app have given the pub the highest beer score in 2025 to date.

But a CAMRA award winning pub must be about more than just beer. It must be a great place to visit, and it must have a community buzz about it.

Quoting CAMRA's Good Beer Guide: "The Kingston is a classic, cosy, side street pub, just off Mill Road. Windows and mirrors keep the interior light and welcoming. Simple tables and chairs cater for groups of many sizes while bar stools suit those who prefer to perch. Real fires in cold weather. The walled garden behind has canopies and heaters and is popular all year round."

A logo painted on the road facing exterior wall claims that it is "A Village Pub in the City" And it is.

Being popular and not far from Cambridge Station, it does get a lot of foot fall from passers-by. Visit regularly on early evenings though, and you will find a real community feel. As the old song goes it's a place where everyone knows your name.

And talking about communities, an award-winning pub should be able to demonstrate that it supports the community. Charitable causes, acting as a post box whilst neighbours are at work, supporting local producers are all aspects of pub management that will be judged positively.

The Kingston raised £1750 in aid of Alzheimer research in 2024. This year's charity of choice is the Teenage Cancer Trust. Relationships with neighbours – so important in a terraced street – are very good, and a commitment to local breweries (the Kingston is a member of the LocAle scheme) and local food producers are all signs that the pub is willing to play a leading role in community life.

Pub sports teams, Cribbage and Skittles, are soon to be added to by the Kingston Dons Cricket Team.

CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025

The final expectation for a pub to qualify as a CAMRA award winning pub, is that it should show a commitment to CAMRA's ideals and should support the CAMRA campaign.

Look around the single bar and you will find that this pub has this commitment in spades.

CAMRA posters adorn the walls. A commitment to serving ale of consistently good quality is evident in everything on show. There is even a CAMRA library complete with a nationwide collection of CAMRA magazines. Interested customers can join CAMRA - membership forms are available too.

And does it offer a CAMRA discount? Yes, and no. Real ale is sold at a very competitive price, which in effect offers a discount to every beer loving customer.

The Kingston re- opened in 2023. Before that it had been a failing wine bar.

So much has changed in so little time – and it is all good.

How could it not be our pub of the year?

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Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

The last mystery lost pub (*ALE 410*) was the Bowling Green, Chesterton. Here's what Mark Tinkler has written about it.

As a boy in the late 1960s, I sang in the choir of St. Andrew's Chesterton. At the end of evening choir practice, I would leave the vestry and head up Church Street towards the High Street to get my lift home, my mother's A60 Austin Cambridge waiting for me on the High Street outside a handsome and substantial Georgian house. What I didn't know until relatively recently was that this was once the Bowling Green public house: a hostelry which once boasted "3 billiard rooms, walled-in tea garden, chaise house, stables, 7 summer houses, outhouses, yard and a bowling green". The building is still standing, but today it is billed as a "beautifully refurbished heritage building" sanitised and converted into four flats with four houses built over what was the bowling green and gardens at the back.

The Bowling Green may have started life as the King's Arms: a pub of that name appears in Chesterton records from 1755, although (as yet) we have found nothing definitive to link it with the later Queen's Arms incarnation, which we *know* was the forerunner to later versions.

Its history as the Queen's Arms is pretty well documented. In the late 18th century, from the time it came up for sale in 1780 with its "appurtenances thereunto belonging", it featured strongly in village life. William Irish and later John Cooper ran it, there were at least two billiard tables, dances and balls were staged there and it housed the local "engine for extinguishing fires".

Perhaps because of Chesterton's more rural location and its suitability for "genteel families" and the "salubrity of its air" (estate agents writing in 1817), it hosted an annual flower show called the "Annual Pink Feast" where prizes could be won for flower, fruit and vegetable displays – including one for the "best-flavoured melon". This tradition persisted into the middle of the next century: landlord James Gathercole (more about him later) exhibited an immense radish, measuring sixteen inches in circumference. Its fame was such that a local hairdresser sought to preserve and display it as his barber's pole outside his shop in the village.

With John Cooper moving on to the George Inn in Bridge Street [now Byron's. SL] in 1803 after nearly 20 years at the helm, things were a bit quieter for a few years. James Prior took over and it was under his watch that the name changed to the 'Bowling Green'. Following his death in 1823, George Thrift took over. George was a carpenter and part of the local family that gave its name to Thrift's Walk (off the village High Street). He set about improving the house by extending it and installing state-of-the-art Thurston 'Petrosian' slate billiard tables (a company still making billiard tables today). He in turn handed over the mantle to George Moore in 1840. Thrift meanwhile left the Bowling Green to run the pub on the other side of the street, married three times and died tragically – drowned crossing the river at the chain ferry by the Green Dragon in Chesterton.

During this time up to 1840, the politician Sir Robert Peel would have been very much at the forefront of people's minds. He had already founded the Metropolitan Police in 1829 and served one term as Prime Minister. His reinstatement as Prime Minister was in the air, so it is no surprise that when George Moore begged to "solicit the support of the Gentlemen of the University, and the Public generally" to patronise his new pub, he renamed it the "Sir Robert Peel". In the same year George got married and moved into the pub amid a flurry of extravagant notices in the newspapers trumpeting his new tenancy. Sadly, it only lasted two years. He separated from

his wife, moved to Lowestoft and took out adverts in the Cambridge papers declaring that he would no longer be responsible for any debts incurred by his estranged wife.

In 1843, tailor James Gathercole (1801–1872) took over the pub. As well as being a demon radish grower (see earlier), he was a natural businessman and started acquiring bits of land and other properties round about. It may well be that he helped his younger brother Charles who, back from the army, ended up running two other pubs in Chesterton, the Roebuck and the Dog and Pheasant (see *ALE 402*). James ran the Sir Robert Peel between 1843 and c.1852 and then, in 1861, appears a bit further down the High St as the first landlord of the Indian Chief. He then moved on to the House of Commons on Hills Rd – a pub and brewery he was associated with until his death in 1872. (It closed in 1969 and has now been demolished.)

The next landlords were a family from Norfolk. James Todd (b.1801), his daughter Emily and his son George William all ran the pub at different moments in the 1860s. They were a family of brewers and merchants, so it is conceivable that amongst the 7 summer houses in the pub garden, they had managed to fit a brewhouse as well. [Readers may recall George William Todd from *ALE 410* as the founder of both the Crown, Cross Street, and the Kingston Arms. *SL*]

John Harding, a wheelwright, was in control for a largely uneventful period in the early 1870s before a much more colourful character took over. Benjamin Marks – hardwareman, baker, Tory politician, councillor and publican – came to Cambridge in the 1860s from London (via York and Darlington). He established a general store, went bankrupt, set up another in Chesterton before taking on the Sir Robert Peel in about 1875. As a Tory, and in common with many of his contemporaries, he may well have considered Peel a traitor to the Tory cause, or as "a Liberal wolf in sheep's clothing" – whatever, it was during Marks' reign that the Robert Peel brand was expunged and the name changed back to the Bowling Green.

Benjamin married a local girl and threw himself into local charitable causes – he instituted a shoe club, a supper club and was instrumental in supporting the Chesterton Working Men's Club (still running today). We know quite a lot about him because he was very litigious – woe betide anyone who did not pay their grocery bill (he took people to court for debts as little as sixpence). The newspaper felt obliged to point out that in court Benjamin, who was Jewish, was "sworn in accordance with the Jewish customs". The fact that he was Jewish featured in some of the hostile comments thrown at him when he was evicting difficult customers from his pub. One can't help feeling that such hostility was also a contributory factor in the litany of unprecedented petty quibbles raised by the police superintendent when objecting to Benjamin's alcohol license at the 1877 licensing sessions. Similar hostility led to his appearance in court in 1880.

Benjamin was the leader of the local Tories – and in the lead-up to elections in that year, both the Liberals and the Tories held large processions which went round the village. Word got around that the crowd was going to burn an effigy of Benjamin outside his pub and a large crowd assembled. Stones were thrown and windows broken. Benjamin, undaunted, stood at the broken window, waved a pink flag, burned 'red fire' powder on a shovel, and, although he denied it, to encourage the mob to disperse, threw bags of flour and pepper at them.

It is not clear how much longer Benjamin and his family stayed at the pub, but by 1887 he was running the Currier's Arms in Bishops Stortford.

His successor, Charles Calver Lawrence (1841–1918) trained as a whitesmith and was the Bowling Green incumbent for about five years. He was a keen sportsman and started a pub tradition that lasted until the end of the pub's days: the hosting of Chesterton Cricket Club dinners and events. But his passion was for dogs and shooting. He was what was known as a "dog fancier": he bred spaniels and bloodhounds and won many prizes for the dogs he showed. When he wasn't showing or judging shows all over Europe, he was out shooting on local estates – even surviving a lightning strike to his gun on one occasion.

Next up in 1892 was Esther Warren, a woman taking on the license in her own right and not

Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

inheriting it from her husband. It may be that she had originally planned to manage the pub with her husband, but given that he had recently threatened to "smash her head in" and she had applied to the courts for sureties of the peace against him, she was probably wise to go it alone.

The "Bowling Green" was a pub where things happened: the extensive internal accommodation and the spacious gardens were well used for the likes of bowling, pedestrian competitions, quoits matches against local pubs, games of trap and bat, and tea parties. It must have been frustrating for the neighbours, especially when they were playing trap and bat: the ball would often fly over the wall into neighbours' gardens. One such neighbour, fruiterer Mr Hankin, took exception to the pub's punters jumping over his wall to retrieve balls: he assaulted one of them by pushing him over onto his potato patch – and then successfully sued the punter for sixpence's worth of damage to his crop! Activities inside the pub were less troublesome. The three billiard rooms got constant use – even beyond the closure of the building as a pub. Besides billiards there are also references to Bagatelle being played – the billiards-derived precursor to bar billiards.

In 1897, the pub's final landlord took the reins. A basket maker by trade, John Waller (1866–1961) remained behind the bar until the pub closed in 1933. He was a keen cricketer and obviously relished having the cricketing fraternity in his pub over many years. There was an active share-out club and regular char-a-banc trips to Lowestoft and Yarmouth. It seems to have been a happy place so it was a shame that it was forced to close.

The original plan was that the license, once revoked, would be transferred to a new pub planned for Coldhams Lane – the 'Merry Monarch'. Those plans came to nought and instead, the license was transferred to the 'Tolly Folly': the Golden Hind on Milton Road.

When it was pointed out to John Waller that should the licence be removed, he may be out of employment, he replied, "It won't matter much now. I'm getting beyond it".

Thanks to Mark for that. Back to me next time. Who knows where this is, and what it used to be called? A man of some renown used to run it. Do you know who he was?

Send any interesting stuff to me at pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk.

Steve Linley

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A.I. is too important to be left in the hands of machines

The A.I. we're referring to isn't Artificial Intelligence, it's Ale Intelligence, of course. We're not technophobes, we just don't trust anything incapable of smelling, feeling or tasting to create something as delicately balanced as Landlord. That's why we have five hands-on, Heriot-Watt trained brewers involved in every step of the process, from barley delivery to filling the casks. This way, we can make sure that every sip of Taylor's is as delicious as humanly possible. Machines may one day take over the world, just be thankful you won't be around to drink their terrible beer.

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Apples and Pears

The Cambridge Cider & Perry Club continues to grow. We meet on the first Thursday of every month from 7:30pm to celebrate everything that is cider or perry related in informal surroundings. Recent monthly meetings have seen cider and perry tastings from local producers, visits to our Cider Pub of The Year – The Devonshire Arms, talks from local cider and perry makers about how they run their business and how they got started, plus a cider saunter around some of Cambridge's best pubs. Anyone is more than welcome to join us - just keep an eye on their Facebook page (Cambridgeciderandperryclub) or on Cambridge CAMRA's website for information about where we will be meeting.

Cider Pub of The Year 2025 – The Devonshire Arms, Devonshire Road Cambridge

The winner of this year's award is, for the second year running, the Devonshire Arms. Nat and her amazing team have further enhanced the cider and perry experience within their pub over the last 12 months and are deserved winners of this prestigious award. They were closely challenged by the Royal Standard, Mill Road Cambridge and The Black Horse, Rampton. Well done to all three pubs. We will produce a more detailed report on our cider pub of the year in a later issue of this magazine.

City Centre Cider

Several members of the Cambridge Cider & Perry Club recently ventured into Cambridge City Centre to see what real cider offerings the pubs in the heart of our city have to offer. I am afraid to say that most of the pubs we visited offered very little (read zero) by way of 'proper' cider. Quite a few bar staff were quick to point out that they stocked Inch's cider, or Aspalls on draught, but being mass produced, these would not fit the criteria we would use when determining a real cider. It was very sad to see. We did have discussions with a few of the pubs we visited, and they seemed willing to have further discussions regarding the stocking of some of the real stuff, so all is not yet lost.

In one establishment we were advised that "nobody drinks real cider, especially in the winter months", so they didn't stock any. Interestingly, there were only two other people in the pub at the time – and they both asked for cider! All the pub could serve them was Inch's – which is fine in its own right, but there are many real options out there if licensees are prepared to look for them.

We agreed that we will continue our quest to get real cider and perry into town centre pubs; but I suspect it is going to be an uphill challenge. Watch this space….

Rest assured, there will be plenty of cider and perry available at this year's Cambridge Beer and Cider Festival - which runs from the 19th to the 24th of May on Jesus Green. Come and say hello if you are visiting. I'll be there!

Wassail!, Jerry Ladell

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Pirates, Daffodils and other Cambridge Icons

It is a fine day in Cambridge, so I decide to get out to a few pubs and explore some of our city's finest institutions. We start out at the **Earl of Derby** in Hills Road. Planning for the day begins with a beautiful, clear pint of Greene King IPA. We settle at a corner table; a couple sat just a long from us are playing cards; several regulars are nestled in another corner surrounded by horse racing, greyhound and rugby memorabilia. This pub looks quite dark from outside, but there are plenty of windows plus lots of fairy lights. The other real ale on offer is Wolfpack Alpha Stout, (4.2%) gentle coffee hinted.

Heading back from the bar, I notice a sizeable RNLI display and get chatting to Ron, armed with pirate tankard. It turns out that the pub, with much driving force from Ron, has over recent times raised over £1500 for this charity. Ron, landlord of The Captain Cook pub in Middlesborough for over 25 years is such a likeable character. Nicola and I wish we could stay chatting for much longer.

Along Hills Road, the 40-acre site of the **University Botanic Gardens** has 2 entrances and we go around to the Bateman Street side. We are drawn towards the island which (legend has it) has quite recently been home to as many as 100 badgers! I find this hard to believe, but as it is high noon we are unlikely to see evidence of this most nocturnal of creatures. Pressing on through various gardens, I am surprised to find that one of the most colourful areas is actually the Winter Garden. I find that the best place (for me) is known as *The Fairway*, which has thousands of daffodils in bloom. I am assured that if I return in Summer this will be home to a huge variety of wild flowers, an encouraging habitat for bees. I do find this garden to be an inspiring and uplifting experience; a place of peace right in the middle of a vibrant city.

A couple of hours wandering creates a thirst, so we leave via the Hills Road exit. A few minutes' walk away is the **Alma**, in Russell Court. This Greene King pub looks very dark from the front approach, and if it weren't for one large window at the front would be very gloomy indeed!

I am buoyed by the choice of 6 real ales, and go for a Tring Dovetail (4.3%) which has a fresh piney aroma. This we decide would go very well with a fish finger sandwich served with some lovely straw fries and a leafy side salad. (No goujon nonsense here – these are proper fish fingers.) The Dovetail really is an excellent pale ale; crisp and peardroppy. The Alma is Cambridge's self-proclaimed real ale and rugby pub; you can't

really argue with that. There are shirts, pictures, trophies and balls everywhere; all the walls have famous rugby quotes. This is my first visit to The Alma and I quite like it. I am keen to return to try its Nene Valley, Brewsters and Oakhams beers that are also on tap.

We continue to Lensfield Road to go to another great Cambridge icon – **The Scott Polar Research Institute**. If you are interested in the human quest to *plant the flag* then this is the place for you. This fine little museum is now open 10am to 4pm from Tuesdays to Saturdays. It is free to enter, with displays including kayaks, unusual clothing and all sorts of historic scientific equipment.

I enjoy looking at some of the globes and the large maps trying to see if Greenland is still there. As a museum this is a fine tribute to some of our greatest pioneers. It is still an active site with ongoing research into the mysteries of the polar regions and perhaps more importantly than ever: climate change.

A slightly longer walk takes us through a few side streets but eventually we reach Mawson Road, home of the classic back street boozer the **Live and Let Live**.

"The Live" used to be very much one of my favourite pubs, especially way back in the days when their liver and onions was the highlight of my week. When the pub closed around COVID times I feared the worst but they have happily

regrouped. This is my first visit since and I feel some trepidation that it may not live up to my expectations. How delightful to learn that so little has changed! Even the beer choice is almost exactly the same with Nethergates and Oakhams beers dominating. I go for the Nethergates Azza March Hare, a lovely copper bitter, 3.9% and £5.40 a pint. Pricewise, this compares reasonably favourably for me as a town centre pub; it is a good pint with bitter hops and sweet caramel in equal balance. I still see the wood all around; a few railway magazines and a similar but perhaps not quite so extensive selection of whisky/rum. Nicola can't resist a little whisky and goes for Busker Triple Cask. Just one ice cube and it hits the spot, slightly caramel and quite honeyed. The pub feels almost exactly the same – but there is one thing – it feels so much cleaner than before! I pick up a small Cambridge Tourist Information Centre guide entitled *15 Great Cambridge Town Pubs*, and leaf through it while choosing another drink. The Nethergates Eon Milk Stout (5%, £5.60) has sweet espresso notes and is a real roasty treat to finish with.

Fred Laband

Paws for thought

Hello Everyone,

We all know that going to dog friendly pubs makes my tail wag. I drag my male human into them whenever I get the chance – I think it's true to say we never knowingly pass one by.

And everyone knows that I love a photo opportunity too.

My male human has been overheard telling people that he was the first person through the door when Hudson's Ale House in Trumpington reopened. I can tell you without a doubt that the first person through the door was me. My male human was second. He loved the beer and the Greek food; I loved the comfy seats. My friends Steve and Hayley now have four Cambridge pubs; The Hudson Ale House, The Portland Arms, The Castle and The Alexandra Arms. They are all dog friendly and are all on my must visit often list

We recently took a visit to the Red Lion at Kirtling. I love this pub because it is close by the Stour Valley and there are lots of circular rambles for me to lead. My friend Mojtaba is the owner and the chef. The food is very good, and my male human says that the Nethergate beer is always good. We took some pictures of me with a pub regular, an octogenarian called Rocky. Unfortunately, there is no accounting for human failings, and my humans mistakenly deleted these pictures without saving them. I am so sorry Rocky, but I will come out to see you soon and we'll take some more.

My second picture is in another Red Lion – the one in Swaffham Prior. I took my humans out to visit pub licensees Lana and John and treated them to a Sunday dinner. This pub is very popular with both dogs and humans. It has just been voted the Cambridge CAMRA Rural Pub of the Year. This is my doggy friend called Bunty. Bunty is a Pointer. She took a great liking to my uncle Roger and spent a lot of time spread across his lap. Though she did join me on the floor when he wanted to eat.

Sunday dinners in the Red Lion are very popular – be sure to book if you'd like to try it out.

I must confess. I don't often go to church. When I do, it is usually a quick stroll across the graveyard, perhaps to leave a message or two on the older gravestones. I didn't think I would be allowed to enter the church itself. Imagine my surprise when my humans took me into St

The wonderings of a pub going dog

Andrew's Church in Sutton so that they could get a beer!. Sutton holds this beer festival twice a year. The profits go towards church maintenance. It was a very busy Saturday afternoon, lots of people, Morris dancers and a bouncy castle! Not wanting to be embarrassed, I didn't leave any messages that day.

Me and my male human like to share our number of pub visits between city and rural pubs.

There are over 200 real ale pubs in the CAMRA Cambridge and District area, and most of them are dog friendly. Of course, we sometimes unintentionally neglect one or two. Until recently this was the case with the Live and Let Live, Mawson Road, Cambridge. We hadn't visited since Adam, pictured here, had taken over in 2023. My friend Fred Laband tells you about the pub in his article Pirates, Daffodils and other Cambridge Icons (page 18), so I'll just say that Adam and I got on very well, and my male human loved the beer – especially the dark ale which is always on offer there.

As we were leaving the Live we attracted the attention of Cristina and her friend Guy. I was so taken with them we just had to take another picture!

It is very rare that when we are walking along Mill Road we do not pop in to say hello to our friends in the Geldart and the Kingston Arms. I always get a warm welcome, and a few dog treats! Here I am in the Geldart, Ainsworth Street, with Julie and Alice.

The Geldart is a Punch Taverns pub that makes great use of the Small Beers list and usually serves a beer from Cambridge's Moonshine Brewery. My human says I should insist that you try the Moonshine Heavenly Matter if it is available, though all of Moonshine beers are good!

This is Shane. We met each other when I took my male human on a rare evening walk to the Kingston Arms, Kingston Street. We had wanted to tell our friends Mark and Richard that the pub had been voted as Cambridge CAMRA's Overall Pub of the Year. They already knew because my uncle Ali Cook had texted them earlier in the evening.

Oh well, said my human, we might as well celebrate with a pint while we are here.

Woof for now, Gladys Emmanuelle

An Elysian View - All in a Name

This Winter's 15th Elysian Beer Festival at Ely Maltings was buzzing as usual and it was a pleasure to exchange banter with the thirsty patrons in my role as a volunteer bar steward.

It didn't take long to realise that one ale behind me was in great demand - Frank Zappa, from Moonshine Brewery, Fulbourn. It was unfamiliar to me, so I asked one or two waiting with dry throats, what was the attraction? "Never had it before" they said, "Have to try it because of the name!".

Then I remembered an article I penned some years ago which was put in the can, but was never published. You may think it strikes a chord.....

I popped into my local the other day, peering in eager anticipation to see what ale was on offer, and spotted a pump clip which brought an instant smile to my face. It made me wonder; how many times have I felt compelled to try a brew purely because of its amusing name? Could it have been a clever marketing ploy, I mused, or was it simply because the brewer had an impish sense of humour?

After enjoying a couple of pints, I returned home to dig out the latest edition of The Good Beer Guide and turned to the back where the beers within were listed in alphabetical order. It wasn't long before I began chuckling to myself.

The first beer which toyed with my imagination was the brainchild of the Corinium Brewery, Cirencester. It suggested to me that, over the years, what we have understood to have been a well-known salute, could actually have been a regular question put to that famous roman emperor whenever he popped into a convenient hostelry – Ale Caesar?

The Rock and Roll Brewery, Hockley nr. Birmingham has surely created an instant hit by naming the Boss of its beers Brew Springsteen - a bit heavy for some perhaps. Another celebrity ale has emerged from The Brew Foundation, Winkle, Cheshire – Janet's Treat Porter – something to sink your teeth into, no doubt. Then, of course, there's that gem from the Box Steam Brewery, Holt, Wiltshire – Piston Broke – must have been addictive!

There are many more, some which are not officially recognised, having evolved by mixing two ales in one glass. For example, I have enjoyed, more than once, a popular winter concoction in some Adnams pubs known as the very un-politically correct Mother-in-Law. It's a blend of Old and Bitter!

Then there are some wonderful names for the breweries themselves. My favourite is situated in Coldharbour, Surrey and was, no doubt, influenced by the neighbouring village of Leith Hill. Just the thought of a pint of Tallywhacker or Crooked Furrow from The Leith Hill Brewery could be enough to strike terror into the hearts of the squeamish.

And what was the name of the brew in your local which inspired this article, I hear you ask? Daleside Old Leg Over – delicious!

Unfortunately, one of the breweries, Box Steam, has since folded . I suppose, on reflection, it was inevitable that Piston Broke became a symptom of the big end.

Cheers, Bruce Pattern

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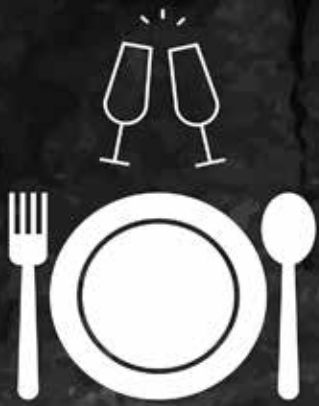

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